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ABSTRACT

Intended as a guide to outdoor education for parents of 6th grade boys and girls, this document explains the purpose of outdoor education, which is to extend the classroom to the outdoors. It is explained that many learning concepts can be taught and understood with greater efficiency in the out-of-doors and that the activities are related to the regular classroom program in every way possible. Some of the 8 basic objectives are (1) to develop an appreciation of the outdoors; (2) to make classroom learning more meaningful; (3) to develop a sense of responsibility; and (4) to learn to live in the outdoors, in other words, to develop skills in camp crafts and cooking. The document contents explain to the parent the philosophy of camping, what outdoor education is, and how it can contribute to a child's development. A major premise of outdoor education, the basic principles of the outdoor education program, 13 aims and objectives of what camp can do, and the role of the classroom teacher are presented. A camping vocabulary of approximately 73 words is provided. (FF)

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A PARENTS GUIDE TO OUTDOOR EDUCATION

(A Project Study-School Day Camping Program for Sixth Grade Boys and Girls)

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INTRODUCTION

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

PARENTS GUIDE

In May, the Park Intermediate 6th grades will participate in the Westbury Public School Outdoor Education Program. This special activity will be scheduled during the regular school day. Last year a pilot study was conducted in this area with 6th graders of another school in our district.

The camp site selected for this special project is the Nassau County Garview Point Science Museum, at Glen Cove, New York. In addition to its museum facilities, the site offers an ideal natural setting for our outdoors; consisting of fields, trails, wooded areas, a variety of plant and tree life as well as its excellent location to the bordering waterfront area and its relationship to Long Island Sound.

Outdoor education is not another school subject, but is an extension of the classroom, which both complements and supplements our regular school program. Our intention for this experience is to extend the classroom to the outdoors, so we may teach, explore, discover and develop many learning concepts that can be taught and understood with greater efficiency in the outdoors. Thus, outdoor education can best be defined as a well planned learning experience taking place in the out-of-doors.

The programmed activities are related to regular classroom program in every way possible. Some of our basic objectives are:

1. To develop an appreciation of the outdoors.
2. To get along with each other, sharing and working together.
3. To make classroom learning more meaningful.
4. To develop a sense of responsibility.
5. To develop new interest and hobbies for leisure time.
6. To learn to live in the outdoors, developing skills in camp crafts and outdoor cooking.
7. To develop an interest and appreciation in the perspective of conservation and our natural resources.
8. To encourage the optimum physical, mental, social and emotional growth and development of the students partaking in the school camping program.

The camp activities program might include such areas of learning as conservation of natural resources (soil, land use, water and forests), the use of maps and compass, learning skills in outdoor cooking, hiking, studying the natural surroundings (land, trees, plants, water) and a historical study of the area.

After spending a complete day at the camp site, prior to returning home, we will culminate our camping program with a bus tour of the Glen Cove Area. Historical sites and special places of interest will be pointed out to all our students on this scenic tour.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF CAMPING

The outdoor education experience in camping is an outgrowth of the regular school program. Camping is an extension of the classroom into a natural environment known as the outdoors. Therefore, it is an integral part of the total education of the child, providing an optimum environment for his developing an understanding and knowledge of the related subjects and school curriculum to the outdoors. Having established this relationship of the learning within the classroom to the real situation, it thus becomes more meaningful.

Within this setting, characterized by effective teaching, supervision, leadership, flexibility and the democratic processes, there is an opportunity for direction towards personal growth, as well as learning the skills related to outdoor living, that is not readily developed within the existing school classroom.

Today with society becoming so complex, we must be prepared to make many social adjustments. An outdoor education experience in camping offers to the students many opportunities to develop a capacity for self direction, judgment and resourcefulness, in addition to establishing vital interest, sharing and accepting responsibility, working together, developing friendships and good group relationships.

Outdoor learning experiences should be utilized for the purpose of teaching those aspects of the curriculum which are relevant to, and can most effectively be taught in the out-of-doors and thus act as a reinforcement to other subject matter. Merely going outdoors is not at all adequate. Proper use of the outdoors requires purposeful pupil-teacher planning. For effective learning experiences to occur in the out-of-doors, a camping program should center around the resources and its natural phenomena. It has been stated that "outdoor experiences are essential for an understanding of the natural environment and so are basic to a complete education."

Having extended the classroom to the outdoors, the students are provided with direct learning experiences. It is these direct experiences, which involve multi-senses that reinforce learning. Our natural environment provides a unique setting for the realization of the objectives of education.

III. WHAT IS OUTDOOR EDUCATION?

Outdoor Education is an outdoor classroom which provides direct learning experiences, where youngsters can explore, develop, create, discover and learn about nature in its natural setting.

The outdoor education program becomes an extension of the regular classroom. It is not another subject added to our school curriculum. It offers to our youngsters an entirely different environmental setting. In this atmosphere our boys and girls can effectively learn new skills, develop and understand the many concepts surrounding them in the outdoors. Thus, OUTDOOR EDUCATION BOTH SUPPLEMENTS AND COMPLEMENTS THE REGULAR CLASSROOM AND THE SUBJECT MATTER TAUGHT THERE.

IV. WHY OUTDOOR EDUCATION?

It can provide many more activities and opportunities leading towards individual and group involvement of the students attending a camping program. The purpose is to offer the youngsters varied activities that will relate the outdoors and nature to the subject that is being taught in the classroom.

V. A MAJOR PREMISE OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor education employs the use of outdoor settings as laboratories for classrooms, related field experiences, study observation and research.

Dr. Lloyd B. Sharp, known to those in the field as the father of school outdoor education has described his principal thesis as follows:

> "That which can be learned inside the classroom should be learned there. That which can best be learned in the out-of-doors through direct experience, dealing with native materials and life situations, should there be learned."

VI. THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF OUR OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. To apply to all subject areas and be a part of the total school curriculum.

2. To provide an experience in democratic living, and group cooperation.

VI. (Continued)

3. To coordinate and integrate all experiences of the outdoors with the regular classroom and school curriculum. (The students will learn about aspects of the outdoors which cannot be learned in the classroom.)

4. To provide a learning by doing situation that will stimulate active participation by each student.

5. To enable each student to discover, create, explore and make observations in the natural environment.

6. To extend the classroom to the outdoors, offering the student additional experiences, thereby providing a culturally enriched program.

7. To promote active participation, planning and evaluation on the part of the students.

8. To establish a relationship, between the regular classroom subject matter aims and the experiences offered by camping in the outdoors.

9. To develop an effective pre-camp planning program designed specifically for each class so as to individually meet their aims, experiences and needs.

VII. WHAT CAMP CAN DO

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To develop an appreciation of the outdoors.

2. To have the camp experience act as a blender for the formal classroom activities and the conservation of nature.

3. To provide a friendly and informal atmosphere of learning and fellowship.

4. To develop an understanding of human nature and how to get along with others by sharing and working together.

5. To develop a sense of responsibility both as an individual or member of a group--leading to better citizenship for society.

VII. (Continued)

6. To develop new interests and hobbies for leisure time activities which will carry over to adult life.

7. To provide an opportunity for learning new concepts and ideas related to the school curriculum taught on an entirely new basis, therefore, relating learning from within the classroom to the real situation, thus becoming more meaningful.

8. To learn how to live in the outdoors, developing new skills in camp cooking.

9. To further develop an interest and understanding in the basic scientific appreciation of the full perspective of conservation principles.

10. To provide a healthful school camping experience that consists of a wholesome good time.

11. To be concerned with the safety and welfare of the students.

12. To provide effective and efficient planning, programming, activities supervision, administration and leadership.

13. To encourage the optimum physical, mental, social and emotional growth and development of the students partaking in camping.

VIII. ROLE OF THE CLASSROOM TEACHER IN THE OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

The teacher plays a vital role in developing the necessary interest and attitude required of the class. This is the foundation for which the entire camp program is to be cooperatively built upon. Instruction will be presented and conducted in various ways to include the many aspects relating the curriculum and subject matter to the outdoors. It is the classroom teacher, that is best equipped to instruct, guide, direct, plan and coordinate their classes' camping experience in determining its relative success.

The teacher has the opportunity to observe his entire class and together can experience new discoveries. Through the outdoors in a natural environment, the teacher is in a position to measure and evaluate many relationships which may not have normally occurred within the school classroom. The teacher is best qualified to understand his class and interpret individual or group responses to the outdoor program. Also, he occupies the central position in relating the classroom experiences to the outdoors in addition to planning, executing and eventually following up his class's camping experiences.

Teachers involvement is as follows:

I. Pre-planning outdoor experience

II. The actual outdoor camping program (serves as coordinator)

III. Post camp activities -- Follow up after class has attended camp.

CAMPING VOCABULARY

SOME WORDS THAT WILL APPEAR

Amphibian
Anemometer
Audubon

Barometer
Botany

Carnivorous
Carbon Dioxide
Carrion
Chaparral
Chemical
Chlorophyll
Chlorination
Compound Leaf
Conifers
Conservation
Counselor

Deciduous

Ecology
Elevation
Endothermic
Erosion
Eruption
Evergreen
Exothermic

Ferns

Geology
Gills
Granite
Growth Rings
Germination

Humidity
Hygrometer

Incubation
Invertebrate

Mammal
Metamorphosis
Meteorology
Minerals
Moss

Natural
Nursery
Nocturnal

Ornithology

Petal
Photosynthesis
Pheasant
Pistil
Pollen
Pollinate

Quail

Reptile
Reservoir
Resources

Safety
Sanctuaries
Scales
Sea Level
Sanitation
Softwood
Species
Spring
Stamen
Survival

Temperature
Thermometer
Trail
Transpiration

Vertebrate

Watershed
Water Table
Weather

Zoology